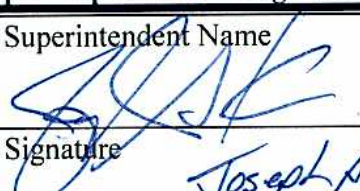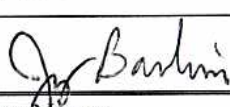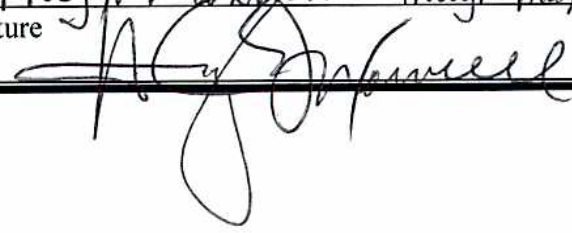# Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Sub-grant Application Assurance Sheet

Project Title: _The VISTA Project_   Amount of Request: $ _71,700_

District Name (Fiscal Agent for Consortiums): _Potlatch School Dist._ Number: _285_

Please list the school name, and indicate whether it is a targeted school or a partner school and certify the CIPA compliance for all participating schools within the project:

Dist. # or 'P' for Private School	School Name	This school is a targeted school 'T' or a partner school 'P'.	This school is in compliance with the CIPA as outlined on page 3 of the guidance document.
285	Potlatch Elementary School	(T) P	(YES) NO
285	Potlatch JH/SH School	(T) P	(YES) NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO
		T P	YES NO

I certify that we have contacted the charter and private schools in our area about participation in this grant.

Superintendent Name	E-mail	Telephone
	joe.kren@potlatchschools.org	208/875-032?
Signature _Joseph A. Kren_		

District Technology Coordinator Name _Jay Baldwin_	E-mail jayb@potlatchschools.org	Telephone 208-875-1231
Signature _Jay Baldwin_		

Project Director Name (if different than District Technology Coordinator) _Hugh Maxwell_	E-mail hugh.maxwell@potlatchschools.org	Telephone 208-875-1331
Signature		

The VISTA Project
Vocabulary Instruction using SchoolPad Technology Applications

1. Proposal Abstract

The VISTA Project is a technology integration endeavor that utilizes computers combined with projectors and Interwrite SchoolPads to teach systematic and explicit vocabulary instruction. Many of our students come from homes of poverty and lack motivation and readiness for literacy learning. Both our elementary and junior high/high school are in Needs Improvement in Reading and we continue to struggle in Language as well. Because words are the very foundation of learning, we have made improving our students' vocabulary growth an educational priority. The use of visual display technologies is highly motivating for students who have become disengaged from the traditional "sage on the stage" format. The innovation and flexibility of the SchoolPad not only engages students but teachers as well. No longer does the teacher have to stand in front of the class using antiquated overhead transparencies. The wireless capability of the SchoolPad allows teachers to use proximity to reach all areas and all students in the classroom and its seemingly limitless applications invigorate and enliven new twists on old lessons.

As a District, we are committed to improving student achievement. The District recently demonstrated this commitment by purchasing a new reading and language curriculum across the entire K-12 span. This purchase was part of the District School Improvement Plan to increase student proficiency toward grade level standards. The VISTA Project will promote student engagement with the new reading and language curriculum as well as with other subject areas. As teachers use the SchoolPads and projectors to display appealing visual vocabulary lessons, students' word knowledge will increase. This increase in their knowledge of words and associated concepts will build a scaffold upon which they will continue to develop improved comprehension and intellectual capacity.

We recently revised our technology standards and are developing our technology integration professional development plan. VISTA will provide teachers with the tools and training to help students meet guidelines for technology use. The project will provide a platform upon which every instructor in our district will begin to build experience and confidence in the use of technology integration. Having teachers begin by using this pioneering equipment in a safe and relatively simple format each and every day will build a self-assurance and a comfortability that will lead to new ideas for uses of the SchoolPad. Because the SchoolPad software allows users to control and manipulate any illustration, chart, diagram, image or computer software, it is a natural fit for use with student presentations as well.

We have seen and experienced how the tools in this project have changed the face of classroom instruction in other districts, resulting in increased student achievement as well as effective technology integration. We believe this project will transform our own district's classrooms as teachers and students begin to experience the inspiration that comes with new ideas and renewed efforts.

2. Educational Need

Potlatch, Idaho is located in the northern part of the state where broad vistas of rolling wheat fields and pine forests are in abundance. Like many North Idaho towns, our community's economy depends primarily upon the timber industry. Unfortunately, the instability of local mills and inconsistent logging employment create an economic hardship for many of our families with nearly half of our students and their families struggling with poverty.

Our district is comprised of an elementary school and a combined jr/sr high. We have approximately 450 total students with a majority of those living outside the city limits. Attendance averages around 94% across the district and because of the instability of the local economy we have a fairly high mobility rate. We have a predominantly Caucasian student population and over the last several years our free and reduced lunch rate in the district has hovered between 43 and 51 percent depending on the time of year. Many of our low socio-economic status students come from homes where parents do not have the educational background, time or energy to help their children achieve academically. The results are a district wide lack of preparation, aspiration and vision amongst many of our students. These students come to us each day unmotivated and unprepared and, often times, unwilling to try. The impact has been evident in our low SES students struggling to meet grade level proficiency and our schools unable to consistently meet AYP in reading and language for the last four years. The elementary school has also been unsuccessful in meeting proficiency targets on the Idaho Reading Indicator for the last few years.

ISAT Data

Percentage of low SES students **not** proficient on Spring Reading ISATs				
School	2007	2006	2005	2004
Potlatch Elem.	*35%	*29%	17%	23%
Potlatch JH/SH	*31%	9%	*32%	*41%
* Did not make AYP				

IRI Data

Percentage of students **not** receiving a 3 on the Spring IRI				
Grade	2007	2006	2005	2004
K	61%	17%	51%	26%
1	35%	37%	24%	20%
2	61%	55%	50%	47%
3	45%	38%	33%	52%

The data above along with recent language assessment concerns at the building level shows that an unacceptable number of our students are suffering the ill effects of linguistic poverty. Research shows that students who come from low socio-economic status backgrounds enter school with a word vocabulary that is often 50-75 percent less than that of their middle and upper class peers. The effects of this language deficiency include low state test scores, inability to show proficiency toward grade level work,

referrals to Title 1 and Special Education and possible retention. Without well-designed classroom intervention, our students will continue to fall further behind and never realize the endless possibilities that lay before them. It is ironic that an area filled with endless vistas should also be a place where many students so easily lose sight of their futures.

We believe that in order to combat the serious reading and language deficiencies that exist in our district we must find ways to increase students' word knowledge. The plan is centered on explicit systematic instruction in vocabulary development. The strategies that teachers will employ will be research-based and best practice. Instruction will occur daily during Reading, Language and Math. The approach will focus on words that are imperative to subject area success and linked to state standards. Only through increasing students' word knowledge will they be able to adequately engage with, and advance through, grade level curriculum and instruction.

There is quite possibly no more important factor in reading success than vocabulary development. Numerous studies (e.g., Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Baumann, Kameʻenui, & Ash, 2003; Becker, 1977) emphasize the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Students failing to meet standards in reading at Potlatch Elementary and Jr/Sr High School are at risk of more than not passing the ISAT. Proficient reading skills are vital to success in all academic areas and career paths. Students who do not develop vocabulary skills will have extreme difficulty advancing in upper grade subjects, and are at a much higher risk of failure and dropping out of school.

Another area of need in the district is in the area of technology instruction and integration. A survey of teachers in grades K-6 yielded data that showed nearly 60% felt they lacked adequate classroom equipment to effectively integrate technology and to instruct students in our newly developed grade level technology standards. Review of the survey also revealed a strong desire for training in strategies to integrate technology into their daily instruction and curriculum. The installation of and training with mounted ceiling projectors, SchoolPads and Interwrite software will provide teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge to begin the resolving this problem.

As teachers receive training in the use of the Projector and SchoolPad we anticipate that they will begin to see new and innovative ways to use the technology. The adaptability of the Interwrite software to the individual needs of each user will allow teachers to continually improve the methods and strategies they employ to engage students in all subject areas.

The motivation that the visual display technology will bring to both students and teachers will be the catalyst for what we believe will be a transformation of how teaching and learning occur in our schools.

3. Local Project Detail

Motivation, tools and readiness are the critical issues that this project will address for both students and staff.

Our low SES at-risk students come with many challenges, but we believe that by setting high standards of achievement, employing systematic explicit teaching strategies and frequently monitoring student assessment, we can break the cycle of language poverty within our school community. Through The VISTA Project, our students will begin to see a new and far reaching view of their futures, because it will provide them with the most important tools they need to succeed- Words!

Goal 1 is to increase both high-needs and high-achieving students' reading comprehension and fluency through systematic and explicit vocabulary instruction. Through **motivating** visually displayed direct vocabulary instruction, teachers will systematically demonstrate to students how to determine the meanings of words by utilizing contextual and conceptual clues. As students develop the **tools** to better conceptualize the understanding of words within the text they are reading, it will reduce the cognitive load and actually assist them in comprehending meaning. As student **readiness** in comprehension and word recognition and acquisition increase, fluency will follow. The most critical component of this type of instruction is to teach the concept and context of words and to create ways in which the learner interacts and actively uses the word meaning. Assessment of this goal will be both summative and formative and conducted and reviewed by the project director and technology coordinator. Summative assessment of increases in our students' reading comprehension and fluency through systematic and explicit vocabulary instruction will be measured using the Spring ISAT and IRI results as well as by comparing individual student growth between fall, winter and spring AIMSWeb benchmark testing. Formative Assessments will occur using such assessments as AIMSWeb progress and strategic monitoring, STAR Reading, Accelerated Reader, Read Naturally, core curriculum assessments and informal classroom assessments and observations.

Goal 2 is to increase the capacity for teachers' use of technology integration. We will accomplish this goal by purchasing and installing ceiling mounted projectors, SchoolPads and Interwrite software. With this new and exciting technology available to them, teachers will be **motivated** to integrate these new software and hardware **tools** into the instruction and lessons they are already teaching. The **readiness** that teachers will need in order to effectively use the SchoolPad and software will be provided through a qualified Interwrite Trainer. Completion of this goal will be assessed through evidence that technology hardware and software have been purchased and installed in all classrooms in the district. Other evidence will include two days of completed teacher training in the use and application of equipment and software by the beginning of school as well as the scheduling of two additional training days during district professional development days. The project director and technology coordinator will assume responsibility for the completion and assessment of this goal.

Goal 3 is to increase teachers' integration of technology into instruction and curricula. Once teachers have the visual display technology and training for integration, it will be imperative that they have a purpose for using it. Providing training in the essential components of vocabulary instruction will give teachers the **tools** and **readiness** to begin helping students develop in-depth word knowledge. Teachers' new knowledge of word building strategies and technology integration applications will provide the **motivation** for the development of visually stimulating resources for a comprehensive vocabulary instruction program. We envision groups with similar needs and approaches (primary, intermediate, junior high and high school) to develop specific vocabulary instruction templates through which they will teach vocabulary. These templates will provide familiarity and predictability for students, allowing them to fully focus on the vocabulary instead of the interface. Familiarization with the SchoolPad, software and projector will allow cross-over use into other curricular areas. As teachers' confidence grows, so will instruction in district technology application standards. Assessment of this goal will be conducted by the project director, technology coordinator and members of the technology committee as evidenced by the development of visual technology vocabulary templates and activities. As part of our district technology plan, teachers will be required to develop one technology integration lesson per quarter. Each grade level or subject area teacher should have evidence of 1 integration lesson each quarter.

Project Timeline		
Action	**Timeline**	**Responsibility**
Review of Project guidelines and actions with Staff	February 2008	Project Director and Technology Coordinator
Purchase and installation of hardware and software	June 2008	Project Director and Technology Coordinator
Hardware and software training	July 2008	Project Director and Technology Coordinator
Vocabulary Instruction workshop	August 2008	Project Director and Technology Coordinator
Development of vocabulary instruction templates	August 2008	Building Principals and Technology Coordinator
Assessment of project effectiveness- review of student achievement data and technology integration	Ongoing	Building Principals, Technology Coordinator and Technology Committee Members

4. Sustainability

The faculty, staff, and administration of Potlatch Elementary and Jr/Sr High School are committed to student success and feel that vocabulary development is vital for improving test scores and overall academic performance. Therefore, the district will take on responsibility to maintain equipment and software upgrades in order to ensure that teachers will continue to have the capacity to deliver effective and engaging visually displayed lessons. We will meet this obligation by developing a technology budget line to address both predictable and unforeseen areas of need in training and equipment.

We will also dovetail technology training priorities into our district strategic plan as well as our professional development calendar so that new employees have the opportunity to receive the training they need to support the goals, objectives and actions of The VISTA Project and associated district priorities.

The District will continue to track student achievement and make adjustments as necessary in curriculum and instruction. An emphasis will be placed on maintaining an awareness and commitment to the time, money and energy that will be expended during this project when looking at new purchase in curriculum and other resources.

5. Budget Narrative

Each teacher will use our program to enhance vocabulary instruction by having a projector mounted to the ceiling of each classroom and a schoolpad available for use. Mounting kits will be purchased and fixed to the ceiling and an electrician will be contracted to provide adequate power to each location. The district will cover the cost of purchasing and installing projector screens for each location.

Equipment	
NEC VT 49 Projectors @ $600ea X 33	$600 x 33 = $19,800
GTCO Interwrite IWP 400 Schoolpad @ $500ea x 33	$500 x 33 = $16,500
Mounting, wiring, and installation @ 400ea x 33	$400 x 33 = $13,200
Equipment subtotal	$49,500

A vendor will be brought in to help teach the instructors on using the new equipment and tying it into their curriculum. Also training will be provided to the instructors on using this equipment in a program designed to better vocabulary instruction. We are using 30% of funding towards professional development which exceeds the demanded minimum of 25%.

Professional Development	
Technology instruction for equipment use	$2500
Vocabulary curriculum instruction	$5000
Stipends paid for thirty three (33) participants to be given four (4) days of professional development.	$13,200
Travel / lodging for mandatory grant meeting	$1500
Professional Development Subtotal	$22,200

Final Total	
Equipment	$49,500 (69.1%)
Professional Development	$22,200 (30.9%)
Final	$71,700